



**Dwight L. Lindhorst, CPA**  
Assistant Superintendent Finance & Facilities

Federal Communications Commission  
445 12<sup>th</sup> Street SW  
Washington, DC 20554

September 16, 2013

Dear Sir/Madame,

I am writing today in response to the FCC's Notice of Proposed Rulemaking which, among other things, proposes changes to the E-Rate program. Before delving into my response to the proposed changes, I want to first thank the FCC for your continued support for the E-Rate program. The E-Rate program provides critical discounts to assist schools and districts (like mine) to obtain affordable telecommunications and internet access.

The E-Rate helps assure that all of the Hazelwood's almost 18,000 students can participate in and benefit from new information technologies, including distance learning, online assessment, web-based homework, and enriched curriculum. In addition, this program has increased communication between parents, students and their educators. As digital learning becomes the 'norm' in education, internet access and adequate bandwidth are a 'must-have', for the Hazelwood School District.

The E-Rate program is a program succeeding in its mission. As the FCC moves forward with this NPRM, it is prudent to remain focused on the fact that E-Rate is a program that works and that any changes to the E-Rate program should be focused on expanding a successful program that has yet to reach its full potential. E-Rate is not a broken program that needs to be fixed; it is a successful program that schools and libraries continue to rely on, a program that must continue to provide funding critical for telecommunications and connectivity. The current program, while needing some marginal updates to its structure, is most strained by increasing demand for E-Rate-supported services and persistently low funding. The single most effective step the FCC can take to bolster E-Rates current and future success is to provide \$5 billion in funding, an amount commensurate with current demand.

There are additional programmatic changes and restructuring that can provide additional efficiencies and savings. To rely solely on programmatic efficiencies, however, without providing additional new funding is a shortsighted solution, a policy that fails to address the program's most significant problem: inadequate funding.

As Hazelwood delayed connectivity and infrastructure updates in response to the recession, E-Rate dollars proved vital in helping schools keep their fiber 'lit.' With the lack of funding available for priority 2 projects the ability to maintain and expand teleconnectivity into the future is questionable. It is critical too that the funding be increased to allow our students the same opportunities to learn in the digital world as other students do around the world.

Thank you for considering my response as you move forward with your decision on the E-Rate program. I applaud the FCC for its continued efforts to protect the already oversubscribed E-Rate program by ensuring the future of this successful program. I urge you to support significant increased funding for the E-Rate program, and to ensure that the program and its limited resources are protected and preserved.

Sincerely,



Dwight L. Lindhorst

Assistant Superintendent- Facilities & Finance